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ABSTRACT

This is a report of a joint Nebraska Wesleyan University-Red Cross project on the Santee Indian Reservation. Through the project, Wesleyan students took a three-credit course in which they learned principles of health education, physical education, recreation, and nutrition, and used their skills on the reservation. The students participated in all aspects of the community project, from designing and building facilities to training local people to assume responsibility for the project. The project had to cope with numerous social, economic, and physical problems in this underprivileged area, but over time most goals were accomplished. The author of the report recommends that college health, physical education, and recreation programs offer such practical training experience for their students. (CD)

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RECREATION AND HEALTH EDUCATION PROGRAMS FOR THE SANTEE INDIAN RESERVATION.

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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

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SANTEE INDIAN RESERVATION PROJECT

I. INTRODUCTION

The Department of Health, Physical Education and Recreation of Nebraska Wesleyan University is offering a course for three hours of credit working with the co-operation of the Lancaster County Chapter of the Red Cross to develop a program in Student Leadership and Teaching Power, primarily with attention on the Santee Indian Reservation area.

This program is designed to train college students to administer and supervise recreational activities for three years in underprivileged Indian areas. The procedures of this project will be to expose the trainees to all phases of recreation for the underprivileged using lectures, discussions, films and laboratory experiences.

The course will include topics on human behavior, the cost of equipment, adaptation of equipment to the person, psychological effects of this training, use of volunteers, and other topics that require study to have a successful program. Opportunities for practical experience with the underprivileged will be an integral part of the project and will consist of many varied activities.

The purpose, objectives and goals of the Santee Project with the co-operation of the Lancaster County Red Cross is to offer training to undergraduate students, junior Red Cross counselors and other interested people who are interested in physical education and recreation for underprivileged individuals.

The ultimate goal will be to have this program carried on year after year with the hopes that local people can be trained to organize and administer a program of this type in the community.

This project was made possible through the co-operation of a joint project involving the American Red Cross, Nebraska Wesleyan University, Nebraska Health Department (various programs involved), the Governor's Fitness Council.

II. OVERVIEW - SANTEE PROJECT

Wesleyan Students were given scholarships to assist in carrying on a recreational program and Health Education Clinics at the Santee Indian Reservation during May, June, July and August of 1971. The students enrolled for three hours of credit in classes pertaining to all areas of development in the recreational, health and sports areas.

The areas consisted of recreation, Health Education films, Physical Fitness instruction, Nutritional study: all activities were given with the idea they would have carry-over value both in instructional purposes and individual and group recreation. The scholarshipped students all were trained in some specialized area and will be continuing their education or working with this type of program in the future.

Suggestions were given on the construction of permanent equipment such as horse-shoe pits, shuffleboard courts, basketball goals and badminton courts. Initial surveys showed that buildings were in need of paint, playground equipment needed to be installed, and the mosquitoe problem needed to be looked into. The only adequate facilities were in the open air and stagnant water in the nearby river backwater seems a feeding and breeding place for mosquitoes. The road conditions made travel to entertainment and meetings in Niobrara difficult for most families. It is 15 miles to Niobrara from the Reservation on a dirt and partially graveled road.

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Recreational equipment was left with Mr. Albert Thomas, Community Leader. Other equipment was installed by the Indian men and the NWU staff and students. Friendship boxes were left as prizes to be given out as the need arose.

For the last 20 years Nebraska Wesleyan has worked with the Lancaster County Red Cross on a handicapped camping program. Through this association, the National Red Cross offered a grant of $10,000.00 to fund a study to train college students to administer and supervise recreational activities for a three year period at the Santee Indian Reservation in Nebraska. The last two years of the project was funded mostly by Nebraska Wesleyan volunteer work.

A. Goals or Objectives

1. To create a working relationship between Red Cross Staff, Wesleyan Staff and the Santee Indian leaders.

2. To survey the needs as seen by the Indian Leaders and work out a plan suitable to them.

3. To prepare the students from Wesleyan with course material and background information or a rural setting. Also give them an insight into viewing another cultural environment in its total richness.

4. To assign Wesleyan students to leadership responsibilities regarding the project.

5. To adapt a plan of action and carry it out.

B. Method of Implementation

1. Contact with Mr. Bob Mackey, Indian Commissioner at the State Office of Economic Development

2. Letter of introduction by Mr. Mackey to the community leader at Santee appointed by the Tribal Council to deal with these matters.

3. Telephone and letter communications to set up a meeting. This was their regular Tuesday night Indian Community meeting which included Indians from the Santee Reservation and the town of Niobrara.

4. Trip to Niobrara for the meeting. NWU Staff, Joan Herber, RCY Director, Mr. Albert Thomas, Indian Leader, and 17 parents from Niobrara and Santee.

5. Meeting with Mr. Terry Tounsend from the National Office to gain experience of other Red Cross Indian projects. His comments were taped and used in the student orientations.

6. Setting up of definite schedule and getting the agreements of Mr. Thomas.

C. Persons Involved in Planning:

1. Chapter

2. Wesleyan

3. Local Community
   Mr. Albert Thomas, Indian Community Leader
   Mr. Bob Mackey, Indian Commissioner & Santee Indian
   Mr. Jim Lewis, Youth Program Director, Indian
   17 Indian Parents (who attended the initial meeting and helped with transportation and supervision.
   Mr. Ted Robinson, Recreation Leader, Indian
   Mrs. Wolfe, Indian Grandmother who participated in all activities.

4. Other Volunteers

III. TARGET AREA INFORMATION

A. Location

SANTEE INDIAN RESERVATION is 15 miles from Niobrara Nebraska on the Lewis and Clark Lake or northern border of Nebraska. Some of the Indian Community live in Niobrara, and some of them live on the Reservation. Because of the pressure of two Dams, the town of Niobrara is gradually becoming flooded and there has been much underground pressure and basement flooding which has caused a mosquito problem. The State Health Department has recently sprayed Niobrara for mosquitoes but has not done so for the Reservation although it has been requested by the Indian Commissioner, Mr. Bob Mackey. The Santee Community has been building new homes in an effort to make room for returning Indians to the Reservation. In the building process, playground facilities were almost completely covered by the new construction, and children on the Reservation have little recreational activities.

There are no telephones available to the public except for official use, and few televisions. Children can drink from a water hose lying on the ground near the one-room office building. The road to Santee is dirt and muddy during rainy seasons. Most of the countryside is rural, and there is an elementary school on the Reservation for about 30 children. The rest go to school by bus to other towns. There are no movie theaters, and little to do for recreation either place.

B. Attitude of Group and Place of Activity

The Santee Indians have been one of the most progressive groups of Reservation Indians. Their former Mission school dates back over 100 years. Indians who have lived in the area at least 50 years seem to have a very good education and have leadership ability.

1. Economic
   There is little industry and the people are comparatively agricultural. The new "Devil's Nest" Project, a year round development recreational and housing nearby does not benefit the Indians at present as it is still in the stage where highly skilled labor is needed. Mr. Bob Mackey has expressed that in the future it will hold potential jobs for the Indian Community and tourism which will open possibilities for selling local handcraft.

IV SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The following programs and projects were initiated and completed at the conclusion of the five year study by members and staff of Nebraska Wesleyan University.

One of the most important projects was the establishing of health education, first aid and nursing stations for the Santee Community. This should have far reaching effects into the next five to ten years of development. The training of local Santee personnel and supplying needed recreational equipment developed the basis for the completion of several new activity buildings which included all areas of recreation for both young and old alike. This was the impetus given to the building and completion of a $2,500,000 school facility and some sixty six new homes in the immediate area. Santee as a town now consists of approximately 333 residents with two full time policemen, twelve volunteer firemen, two local manufacturing companies employing 125 employees, a 150 head cattle herd for grazing, a Santee Recreation and Camping Park area, and a full time recreational director.

The conclusion would have to be reached that educational institutions with trained personnel can successfully recommend ideas to initiate programs in underprivileged areas and aid communities to become self respecting and confident that certain rules and regulations can still be taught. The ideas can be carried out to develop the good citizenship and leadership that is needed to successfully keep a community intact and meet the problems of tomorrow.

The problems that were apparent on the Santee Reservation presented a real learning experience to both students and faculty of Nebraska Wesleyan. The sanitation and nutritional problems were thought insurmountable when the project started and there was some doubt as to whether we should proceed with the project or bring our work closer to a home site with some assurance of being successful on a project with so much at stake. We would conclude that any institution of higher learning make every effort to someday carry-out a project of this type in Health, Physical Education and Recreation for their students.